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**Fear in Paradise: the affective registers of the English Lake district landscape,  
re-visited**

Paper for *The Senses and Society*, revised December 2006.

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## **Fear in Paradise: the affective registers of the English Lake district landscape, re-visited**

### **Abstract**

During the summer of 2004, the artist Graham Lowe and I undertook a research project entitled *Nurturing Ecologies*<sup>1</sup> within the Lake District National Park<sup>1</sup> at Windermere. This landscape considered as an icon of 'Englishness' is re-visited through the embodied and sensory experiences of post-migration residents of Lancashire and Cumbria. This was an attempt to unravel multiple relationships embedded in visitor engagements with this landscape and thus disrupt the moral geography of this landscape as embodying a singular *English* sensibility, normally exclusionary of British multi-ethnic, translocal and mobile landscape values and sensibilities. The research led to the production of a series of drawings and descriptions made in visual workshops by participants, and a set of forty paintings produced by the artist. These are examined in this paper as representing the values, sensory meanings and embodied relationships that exist for migrant communities with this landscape. These groups are from the Asian community from Burnley and a 'mixed' art group living in Lancashire and Cumbria. The initial drawings and subsequent paintings produced operate as a testimony to the Lake District landscape a site for engendering feelings of terror, fear as well as representing a paradisiacal landscape.

Keywords: *sensory landscape, fear, terror, affect, Englishness*

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<sup>1</sup> The 'Lake District National Park' (LDNP) is the official name of the National Park within which Windermere is situated. It is managed by the 'Lake District National Park Authority' (LDNPA). For the purposes of this paper the acronyms of LDNP and LDNPA will be used to denote these respectively.

## **Fear in Paradise: the affective registers of the English Lake district landscape, re-visited**

### **Introduction**

The English Lake District has been culturally valorised as embodying a space where we can engage with a national landscape 'sensibility'. The 'national' in this regard often slides between being British and English, to simplify matters here, I will refer to these as nationally England and as cultures of *Englishness*. The participants in this research and their responses to landscape are both situated within England, as residents and through the research process, however, their political citizenship is 'British'. The cultural building blocks of experiencing a national park that orientate the 'senses' towards a connection with what it is to be English are made up of visual, aural and literary texts. The Lake District has an identification of a cultural landscape that is iconic through its historical connections with landmark visual artists such as W.M.J. Turner and John Constable, and authors such as Wordsworth and Ruskin. Poetry, Painting, art and landscape merge into a textural palimpsest of a recognisable iconographic source of connection with the sensory experiences that these artists responded to and worked through in their art. This 'iconography' of Englishness is at once a 'visual space' that engenders a 'structure of feeling' which associates you sensually and artfully to a cultural marker of belonging and being within the historically assembled, national sensibility (Daniels and Cosgrove, 1988). This paper, seeks firstly to engage with the emotional registers of this 'structure of feeling' evoked in this landscape in contemporary culture, which makes it an English *place* and simultaneously a textualised 'theatre of memory' (Samuel 1989). Secondly I seek to investigate the sensory responses that contemporary English visitors have to this palimpsest, including those from communities not

typically associated with an Englishness that is recorded in this textualised narration of past sensibilities rooted in a national 'structure of feeling'. Traditionally, these have been figured through a masculinist sensibility (Nash 1996; Rose 1997) and bound up within cultural texts that are collaged to form a singular bounded notion of national culture, formulated as a 'moral' landscape of nation (Matless, 1998). Green (1995) has argued that these landscape values often reflect the 'currency of universal and immanent meanings' which occlude historicist analysis and issues of social access and power (p40). The purpose of this paper is not to re-assert a two-dimensional, singular landscape culture based within the Lake District landscape, but to encourage the engagement with this site as a contested landscape whose representations and cultural narratives are too often figured as exclusionary of multiple histories and experiences including those of gendered and racialised cultural narratives.

The visual methodology used was designed with artist Graham Lowe. Within the visual workshops set up, we sought to explore complex, heterogeneous cultures and sensibilities which also contribute to a modern Englishness that is formed through migrational cultural values from Eastern Europe, the Indian sub-continent, Ireland and Scotland. The process of mapping of these sensibilities through drawings and paintings traces a set of affective registers that are not normally encountered in representations of this cultural landscape. The visual materials from the research aim to make tangible a divergent set of sensory responses to this landscape and show how affect and emotion are experienced. They show a need for an engagement with the heterogeneity of affectual registers such as 'fear' and 'terror'. The emotional and affectual registers that are represented on canvas are understood as being formed within in specific temporal and spatial fields of experience, beyond singular registers of 'fear' and

‘terror’ (Tolia-Kelly, 2006). Firstly I will outline the relationship between viewing cultural landscapes and emotional connectivity, in landscape research. The relationship between vision and emotion however is complex, but by starting with a consideration of the picturesque tradition I hope to illustrate the lack of writing on landscape which engages with ‘embodied’ and ‘emotional’ cultural engagements in the contemporary English Lake District landscape.

### **The picturesque tradition: emotion and landscape aesthetics**

#### **Plate One:** Claude Lorraine (also *Géllée*) – *Landscape with Goatherds* (1636)

The artist Claude Lorraine has been inspirational to British landscape artists and has said to have inspired J.M.W. Turner’s own landscape painting. Lorraine’s work exemplifies the art of the ‘picturesque’ in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The value and experience of the ‘picturesque’ landscape can be traced from writers such as Edmond Burke through to William Gilpin, and painters such as J.M.W. Turner. Picturesque landscape art developed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century between ‘idealism’ in the landscape tradition of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the Romantic tradition of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The cultural sensibility of the picturesque tradition is one which celebrated classical cultures, but which simultaneously celebrated nature’s wild textures and forms. The roughness and drama of natural forms are framed within a ‘timeless’ perspective. *Landscape with Goatherds* epitomized Claude Lorraine’s attitude to nature and form in landscape. The classical forms in this painting set a nostalgic ‘tone’, representing a natural relationship between man, God and nature. Lorraine’s paintings reflect the drama of nature, through use of scale; often contrasts between light and dark are reduced create a sense of distance. Lorraine inspired J.M.W. Turner’s own Landscape in the early years of

his art. Gombrich (1995, p396) argues that 'It was Claude who first opened people's eyes to the sublime beauty of nature'. In this period and up to a century after his death, landscape was understood and was 'looked for' in the form recognizable through the paintings of Lorraine. As Lorraine's images were encountered in popular culture as sepia replicas, tourists carried with them a black glass lens (Claude Glass) through which to view their scene so that landscape could imitate picture. The engagement with landscape was figured through prior textual encounters. The landscape itself was re-shaped to meet the viewer's expectations of form, structure and composition of a site. Nature, in these viewings and experiences was not engaged with in its 'natural' rhythm; instead it was carefully choreographed, to please the ocular fashions of the day. The relationship between the picturesque viewer and the scene is not figured as holistic corporeal engagement, but simply as a process of *picturing*. John Ruskin prized the 'wild' qualities reflected in J.M.W. Turner's works, seeing them as representing the 'natural fact' of wild nature (Hewison et al, 2000, p28). The paintings of Lorraine also inspired Wordsworth in his engagement with the English Lakes; the realism of nature's textures were an inspiration for understanding beauty and led to the Romantic aesthetic in Wordsworth's own art. The distance between the visceral experience and the visual in the picturesque tradition privileges perspective, and aesthetics.

Politically, the aesthetics of the picturesque tradition celebrated un-peopled landscapes, or where there were people, they became part of nature and its rhythms, it also embraced Northern landscapes. Darby (2000) argues that this tradition valorized both the landscapes of the Lakes as central to 'national' culture situated in the 'provincial' spaces of Britain; de-centering the urban cultures of accumulation of wealth and Imperial slavery (p73). The 'picturesque'

was a precursor to Romanticism, which rejected capitalism, and the encroachment of industry into spaces of the countryside. Aesthetics in Turner's paintings became accentuated representations of earth, sky and sea, without 'realism'. In Turner's early paintings [for example see 'Barnard Castle' c1825] where 'nature' is secondary to the forms of architecture of the castle, the aesthetics of the castle are 'naturalized' through their depiction through light and a reduction of their form into nodes of light and color. Their manmade functionality of the castle is distanced, and the historic stone given life through light. Turner's 'Northern tour' also challenged the pictorial differences between representations of 'South' and 'North'.

What is occluded in the picturesque tradition is the idea of the dynamism of landscape and emotional values of the cultural landscape. In the picturesque landscape, the sovereignty of the viewer is enabled only through their looking with a particular stance, both physically, socially and politically. The relationship between emotional responses to a scene and the aesthetics and form of representation are not of primary cultural or intellectual value. What is needed is an understanding of aesthetic developments in landscape art that explore the ways in which Turner and others are drawn to this landscape as a result of emotional responses and values. This is linked to positioning the 'viewer' (as many writers have commented) as visual commander of the scene (Mitchell, 1994; Cosgrove, 1984). The picturesque landscape 'works' for those with a particular social status "The center's turn to its own mountainous north, England's Lake District, marks the production of another layer of opposition to that progressive England, as aesthetics and sentiment combined to locate continuity and tradition in the landscape" that denies economic organization of the land and cultural change (Newman 1987, p117, quoted in Darby 2000, p77).



As an aesthetic form the picturesque landscapes of Lorraine and Turner are purely visual. The value of these representations that they hint at 'nostalgia', 'awe', but remain centered on the visual landscape perspective that avoids corporeal encounter. England and Englishness is recognizable within this 'picturing' of landscape, of which the Lake District landscape became a culturally loaded place, from being empty and desolate (Darby 2000, p54).

The English Lake District historically and contemporarily has been the site of the consolidation of an exclusive memorial to a sense of Englishness. This as a site of exclusion, alienation and it being a site of multicultural history is a rare narrative. Yet, international flows of people, plants and values of nature presented in the landscapes such as place names, and through the grammars and vocabularies of the contemporary tourist economy, shapes this cultural space. The Englishness embedded here is not representative of the history of this site, or the flows of values, memories, narratives and histories which it embodies. It is a landscape made meaningful as site of emotional connectivity. It is a landscape constructed, made meaningful through multicultural mobility, memory and artefactual registers of engagement, many of these have been theorized as 'incommunicable' and 'intangible'. They are also those registers that are "not often looked for" in a contemporary or multicultural context. In this research the missing record is readdressed in some small way (Anderson and Smith, 2001). *Nurturing Ecologies* has sought to make tangible these values and embodied relationships with the Lake District landscape in a twenty-first century context. The aim is to make tangible through participants' own visual texts and the artist's reflections, the emotional value of the Lake District landscape to these British residents. Before I outline my research method I want to introduce some contemporary tensions on race and exclusion in this iconic landscape.

## **The Media and the Ethnic Englishness in the Lake District**

Throughout the summers of 2004, and 2005 several news stories hit the public media that focussed on the problem of access to the countryside for ethnic minority communities (BBC News Online, 2004a; The Guardian, 2005). Headlines such as “*Country faces ‘passive apartheid’*” (BBC News online, 2004b) quoting the chairman of the *Commission for Racial Equality*, where Trevor Phillips responded to the growing concern over the countryside as being a ‘white’ space. All of these figured the problem of ‘nation’ as being a divided environment along lines of ethnicity, exposing the continuing debates about ‘rightful belonging’ to the English landscape (Parekh, 1995; Kinsman, 1995). The LDNPA itself also commissioned several reports in September 2003 (Research House U.K., 2003a; 2003b; 2003c; 2003d) to investigate the nature of ethnic minority exclusion and access. These reports claimed that ethnic minority communities felt disenfranchised from visiting the park and that there were cultural and structural prohibitions to greater access and enjoyment of the park for minority ethnic communities. These included calls for better and cheaper forms of public transport to the LDNP from local areas and cities, the cost and scarcity of which was prohibitive to neighbouring communities from accessing the site. The report also concluded that many did not have *knowledge* about the park and its facilities. To encourage greater access the LDNPA decided to set aside additional budget for guides for ethnic groups – this however was to be done at the expense of cutting all tours and guides available for ‘non-special’ visitors. This move by the LDNP caused national controversy – the headlines laid bare a seemingly ‘cause and effect’ decision in favour of encouraging reluctant and uninterested, black and ethnic (and usually urban) visitors at the expense of providing a service for the already enthusiastic, supportive white middle-class visitor set. As a result a

private sponsor stepped in to save these threatened services to regular visitors. What this media storm revealed was that arguments that criticised moves to increase attendance by minority-ethnic communities were seen to be unnecessary as it deemed that due to their difference culturally, it was not desirable that these groups should be coerced into appreciation of this site, also they were seen to be a 'discordant' market; visually, culturally and socially suspect. Agyeman (1990) argues that the environmental discourses around 'non-native belonging' in the English landscape are in tune with cultural discourses which are exclusionary to a black presence in the rural scene. These attitudes reflect the fact that there is "a process of 'containment' is in operation, it keeps black people in certain specified areas" (Agyeman 1990, p233). The research attempted to revisit these ideas through group discussions and through recording visitor relationships and values and thus review these claims. The Lake District was investigated as being a landscape of nurturing value and one that held a valued place in the lives of British migrants. Their views, values and responses were recorded within the workshops. Two forms of materials were produced, firstly a set of paintings and visual collages made by the participants of the groups, and secondly in the set of final paintings produced by Graham Lowe, which are his reflections on the participants work, transcripts and the whole 'mapping' process. The paintings are situated within a broader cycle of structures of living as the interpretation of values is done through understanding their 'positioning' (Hall, 1990) of these groups within British society. Perceptions and values of the landscape are contextualised through 'oppositional' values of 'town' and 'country' (Williams, 1973).

**'Doing' visual methodologies: making *nurturing ecologies* on paper**

Landscape culture has been rooted within the canon of art history, limiting cultures of appreciation and value through the structures of 'aesthetic appreciation' and composition. Within cultural studies, engagements with questions of 'what do pictures do?' in light of social and cultural geographies of making art, are limited (Crang, 2003). Green (1995) has also argued that landscape appreciation has operated within 'a strait-jacket which inhibits possibilities for a more effectively historical understanding of landscape' (p33, 1995). This is an 'elite' cultural lens that excludes everyday folks embodied and emotional engagement with landscapes. I sought to design a methodology that records the appreciation of the visual landscape from a perspective of 'everyday folk' and in particular the landscape most associated with the visualising the 'national' culture; The English Lake District. The search was for a set of representations, cartographical and sensory tracings of the experience of the Lake District for those left marginal the national iconography. Working with the landscape artist Graham Lowe allowed the opportunity to record and make tangible some 'other' national stories and sensibilities, inspired by this landscape. Overall the research attempts to trace a set of sensory responses to the landscape in a visual mode to enrich the cultural record, and thus extend the variety of 'sensibilities' encountered in artistic representations. This process is in the first instance recording multi-ethnic sensibilities, and secondly through the production of a set of paintings, attempting to redraft the moral geographies of the English Lakes that are usually encountered in the textual cornerstones of Lake District art. The paintings stand as a material contribution to the archives of landscape representations of the varieties of *English* in the story of the cultural values of this iconic landscape. The production of the final paintings is part of a political process, by offering a formal site and space (of the canvas and of the gallery) for the recording of everyday, emotional responses to the Lake District.

Without the canvases the project would be a community-wide process of sharing responses, instead the canvases, in some small way add a tangible archive to both the community and more broadly, contributes to a more complete genealogical picture of the Lake District's 'other' histories, and in particular, its translocal cultural history. The canvases are part of the art historical economy of Lake District representation, produced by a professional artist.

The texts produced in this research are presented here in light of the contextual process of production – to avoid narrowing 'dramatically the field of possibilities through which we might envisage the [*cultures of the*] visual' beyond representation, but as a force shaping social identity and engagements with nature and landscape itself (Green, 1995, p34). This research method aims to ensure that the text becomes the beginning of the process of recording the values of this landscape and not the final product from which art history can delimit meanings, and ideas through their simple form.

### **Thinking and feeling landscape through an inclusive visual practice**

The artist Graham Lowe and I met in Lancaster in October 2003, on discussing landscape art it was clear that we had a mutual interest in memory, everyday values and the material English landscape. We believed that there was a need to investigate other 'visions' and examine an alternative perspective and also to record these in canvas form as these were landscape experiences not normally recorded on canvas. This was a new visual practice which would enrich contemporary writing on cultures of landscape which was attentive to embodied, material and affectual registers of landscape values (e.g. Wylie, 2002; 2005).

However within this body of work, which has sought to be non-representational in its practice, has emerged as a set of narrations that are figured around singular (often masculine) encounters with landscape and embodied performance through it. This mode of engagement situates the articulator of landscape cultures often as sovereign negotiator, and empowered explorer of various articulations of landscape as a 'performative *milieu*'; or negotiations of 'a post-phenomenological understanding of the formation and undoing of self and landscape in practice' (Wylie, 2005), concluding with an idea that 'landscape might best be described in terms of the entwined materialities and sensibilities *with which* we act and sense' (p245). However, the 'we' of these empowered landscape traversing remains a bounded universal body of mobile citizens freed of fear and concerns over racial and/or sexual attack, fear of the lack of 'rightful encounter' with a particular moral geography governing access, and indeed, free of the chains of childcare, work and the economic constraints to roam. What is necessary in these new theorisations of performative cultures of landscape as practice is an increased acknowledgement of the place of difference and power in shaping the matrices within which 'we' can engage with landscape (see also Jazeel, 2005). Roaming in this light, becomes a limited mode of engagement, and cannot accommodate landscape cultures for all. In the research design there is a political intension to record multiple cultures of engagement of individuals and groups who are fearful, frail and feel endangered by the concept of even just walking the lakeside pathways of Windermere. Revisiting the sensory values embedded in the landscape with these various modes of engagement in mind incorporates a desire to recording values of emotional, multisensory beyond written text and for those not having the possibility of accessing this landscape through a visual or literary tradition of English Romanticism, with complete sovereignty. The design was aimed to enable a creative process, empowering

those who didn't write, breaking away from textual expression and at the same stroke breaking the mould of artistic practice and geographical research on landscape; a re-visioning of the emotional values of the Lakes and a re-imaging of this landscapes sensory registers, through firstly the representational art of participants in the form of their drawings and collages. These represent sensory values, materially encountered, as they evoke memories of biographical landscapes not normally seen. Secondly the aim was to produce a set of images by a trained artist. In essence, the paintings produced by the artist, have captured an alternative emotional citizenry to those sensory registers canonised within this cultural landscape.

The collaboration with the artist was a necessary element of the research design. Initially the collaboration ensured that there was a professional engagement with the visual, having an artist present as part of the workshop design and the sessions themselves gave greater respectful engagement with the notion of valuing the visual. Here, the artist made this process one where the participants were engaged with the 'visual' in the form of representations that were produced with attention to form, and aesthetics. The professional 'tome' translated the sessions from being about an amateurish research process where my lack of training became an obstacle. Secondly the production of a set of paintings entitled *Nurturing Ecologies/Maps of the Known World* put these individuals' feelings and values in a tangible form in a gallery space. Again this aim was a political one intended to place responses in tangible form within the cultural economy of Lake District landscape representations. Some of these canvases have been bought by collections in Burnley and Lancaster and are now part of local museum displays and have been displayed in the galleries within the National Park itself.

Graham's paintings themselves, are simultaneously his own reflections, and reflections of others' responses; an interpretation of narratives; aesthetic and formal representations in aural, visual and textual modes, produced in groups. These are not intended as a process of a 're-appropriation' of the participants views, but one where he produced a textual representation on canvas of the relationships with the landscape that were shared with him, and which had struck a chord in his own artistic psyche. There is a constant circulation of feedback of emotions from and between individual involved in the process. The result was a collaborative process between participants, Graham and I where participants were involved in exhibitions. Overall, we worked with various participants – around eighty in all, at Windermere over a period of six weeks in the summer of 2004. To enable a trusting group dynamic we recruited 'ready made' groups of people living in Lancashire and Cumbria. The first was from the *Pakistan Welfare Association* (based in Burnley) which welcomed opportunities for 'activities' and 'trips' and was keen to be involved in something beyond research about 'the negatives' of race riots in Burnley in 2000-1. The recruitment meetings attracted around forty participants; we recruited two groups of twenty-two men (in age all were in their forties and fifties) and twenty-two women (all aged in their late thirties up to their mid fifties). We appointed a translator; a male and female respectively, to suit the requirements of the single sex groups. We then recruited an 'art group' that Graham had led at a community college. The art group was a mixed group of around five men (aged of 21 to 40) and twelve women (aged 38 to 60).

Our first workshop was held at *Littledale Hall*. Here, we had a taste of the Lake District environment, with dining room, and a large lounge space to accommodate thirty people. The space provided the opportunity to enhance the



scope for 'liminality' (see Burgess, Limb and Harrison 1988a and 1988b). At **Littledale** we held two activities; we firstly asked the group about their biographical relationships with past landscapes and present ones. A 'collective' biography came through– in the Burnley group, the men and women had similar routes to each other within the groups, however, the men and women had not travelled together, but biographically their environments of living now, and those left behind in Pakistan, were the same. The Burnley group had migrated from *Gujarat* in Pakistan, named after a state in India because ancestrally their families had been ejected from Gujarat during partition. Gujarat in Pakistan lay on the foothills of the Himalayas; a rural district made up of scores of hamlets where subsistence farming was in practice. *Musafabad* was their main city, most recently this city made front page news in the global media as it was the central site for the organisation of food aid and rescue after the Pakistan earthquake in the Himalayas in October 2005. Graham's 'art group' similarly had a group identity based around their relationship with art. In the biography sessions many of the group talked through their 'values' of the Lakes and many complained that it was difficult to escape 'armchair' tourism and access real landscapes or nature.

In afternoon visual workshop we asked the groups to produce a visual collage of their valued landscapes. Using pictures in books, magazines such as the *National Geographic* which contained several types of landscapes located all over the world including Pakistan, India, Eastern Europe, Britain and African nations, the group created familiar landscapes. A week later the groups met again and travelled to Windermere. We took the groups on a short walk to *Rydal Water* overlooking the Lake, we had a discussion session over coffee at *Brockhole Visitors Centre*, and then in the afternoon we had lunch at *St. Martin's College*, situated at Ambleside.

We had facilities for all – a prayer room, refreshments, washing facilities and a room with a panoramic window overlooking Windermere. In these sessions we asked the groups to record (using paint and paper) their responses to their experience of the Lake District. The aim was to get their responses to the landscape to gain insight into how this landscape *feels* to the groups.

### **Why a visual method? What do the paintings offer?**

The design of our methodology aimed to enhance the possibilities for *multivocality*. Halliday (2000) argues that innovative visual methodologies can counter the traditional power dynamics of other methods, but require continued reflection on whether their aim is to ‘further legitimate the *truth* of the research itself.’ (p504). Pink (2001), in response, argues for reflexive modes of representing participant ‘voices’. Here, the images are *situated* within a biographical context (both in my own papers and in the gallery space in the form of a poster) and the process of production is outlined as transparently as is possible. The images represent the way people experience the Lake District landscape and the assumption here is that seeing is embodied, figured through our cultural lens through which we experience environment. We cannot ‘see’ and ‘feel’ separately, my argument here is that aesthetics in representations are about emotions as much as they are about form, visual grammars permeate with visceral narrations of embodied values. In the picturesque tradition, as a ‘see-er’ you were commanding the landscape, however, everyday landscape experience does not embody such a powerful positioning, this is where ‘embodied’ seeing can be the only way to make sense of cultures of experiencing landscape. We do not simply feel as *context* to seeing, but see through an embodied, feeling engagement. This is why these images are about ‘feeling’ as much as they are about representation, narration or the geopolitics of being English and *other* in a space of narrating the

national cultural sensibility. Kearnes (2000) supports this further - 'one does not simply see . . . objects and phenomena are *seeable* or *visible* . . . in machinic combination with discourses, knowledges and spaces' (p335). The paintings, when exhibited do function as representations, but as a re-visioning of a national iconography through multiple sensory encounters, not normally visualised on canvas. It has been important to design the visual workshops to maximise participation; not to delimit responses through the use of formal English. Visual methods that are designed to include discussions in multiple languages offer a means of 'triangulation' of methods in the case of the Burnley group this allowed the space to be *owned* by those speaking Urdu, Punjabi or Hindi. This move towards working in a multilingual space beyond 'English' opened up the possibility for forging more even relationships within the group, and making the 'doing' of art and painting possible. The use of art materials served to contribute to forcing the groups to work beyond their normal formal grammars and communications about landscape. The paints and paper allowed us to attempt to set up activities which were about capturing alternative vocabularies and visual grammars that are not always encountered or expressible in oral interviews. In previous research it has been difficult to get usually more conservative South Asian groups to talk about abstract environmental values. The process of abstracting 'environmental values', 'emotional values' and 'aesthetic responses' was assisted by being at Windermere and through the visual and physical practice; including the unusual physical actions of using hands, fingers and arms differently to the day-to-day (Bingley, 2003).

Although there are disadvantages to using my particular visual methodology in the ways that I have outlined, I resolved to stick with the format that I designed. My research focus has always been about visual representations as the landscape

tradition in Europe has been figured through these cultures of representation, other methodologies such as photography, and auto-ethnographic approaches to embodied landscape practice do offer alternative routes, but for me the critical notion of 'positioning' is better explored in the group process, and the production of an exhibition of works at the end of the research was also critical. In practical terms problems included getting people relaxed enough to paint can be a psychological mine field. We avoided problems in this regard in the recruitment process; we chose ready-made art-groups or those enthusiastic about the method itself. Even after these precautions were taken the methodology was still difficult as encouraging people to paint, or draw, or to talk about landscape and emotions, inevitably is. The Burnley men were particularly resistant; some felt embarrassed and regarded 'doing art' as 'feminine' and did not represent 'modernity'. Thus some men were wary of being associated with something 'rustic'. Graham took photographs and assisted – some directed him mix colors, others to draw and paint objects that they had struggled with. The sessions were recorded; together these visual and aural texts formed the basis to Graham's paintings. Forty were produced over eighteen months from September 2004 to April 2006. Within this period there were four gallery exhibitions including at the *Duke's Theatre Gallery* (2004); *Townley Hall Museum Gallery* in Burnley; the 'Fear' conference held at the *University of Durham*, and the *Theatre by the Lake*, Keswick. In the next section I want to analyse the meanings embedded in these paintings.

### **Re-presenting emotional geographies of the park: interpretations on canvas**

Plate Two – Isolation

Plate Three - Safe in dark places

Plate Four - Fear of high places

These three images are examples of a counter-landscape aesthetic formed by Graham Lowe in his interpretations of the group's responses. In this section I have reflected Graham's explanation of the production of this set of images. The paintings produced were created using a soft pastel and liquid acrylic. His aim was to produce small intimate images (32 cm squared), which would help to express the emotions being discussed in the group sessions. He was aiming to express something of the response of the participants in the groups to the landscape. In Graham's view, the canvas itself 'creates a site for the imagination', a place in which, perhaps the viewer's emotions may be garnered and indeed mirrored. At the exhibition in Lancaster some of the viewers discussed fear, and anxiety when viewing the paintings 'isolation' and 'remembered landscape'. They resonated with them through the form and palette. For Graham the material that he had to work with in different forms - on audio tapes and the materials from the workshops - was overwhelming at first. Graham decided to work almost entirely from the transcripts to get some depth of understanding of the statements which resonated with him.

*Isolation* is based on Boris. In the workshop he compared the LDNP to the area in which he lives; the outskirts of a small village a landscape of isolation and anxiety. A landscape in which there is space to reflect. He says "You can't get away from yourself, you are faced with yourself, and there is a lack of diversions. If you are emotionally or psychologically in a bad place all sorts of fears and anxieties come up". In an interview about the painting, Graham states that in it 'I have tried to capture the essence of his statement', to do this, within the painting there are no trees, no landmarks, and no points of reference. Boris talked of his fears and anxieties which as he put it, "came up" during his visit to Windermere. The marks at the bottom reflect the 'rising up' of these anxieties- "rising up like

bubbles in a glass". Boris's fear is caused by being in the landscape, this is a catalyst to his facing his own anxieties, and he cannot escape these when he is in this space. Boris, in this encounter is not engaged with a 'national' landscape, his experience is counter to that of Lorraine's followers and different to usual responses to Turner's popular scenes. His claustrophobia is encountered as an individual emotion in the landscape of the Lakes. He is sensitized and fearful when the landscape is bare, un-peopled and non-utilitarian.

In his painting *Safe in Dark Places* Graham reflects on Sam's comments on how he felt safer in the dark places of the lakes, in the forests. He loves tree roots, the rocks, and mosses "the grubby, spotty spaces". Sam feels fear of the open spaces, when in the open, he feels unanchored, vulnerable to attack. In the painting the light area is surrounded on three sides by a dark border. The object in the centre literally the grubby spotty, space, appears to be three dimensional, a container. This is like a womb like space with a life-line, an umbilical chord that links him to the outside world like a tree root. This is for Sam the place in which to feel safe. This painting is made reflecting Sam's own picture, which is a dark, black mass of paint with little colour or lines. On seeing this image the group responded with shock and surprise at his response to the paradisiacal beauty of the surrounding landscape. Sam craved the safety of enclosure, the safety of organic matter away from an objective perspective over vistas and panoramas of the Lakeland fells. The scale of the landscape to which he retreats, reflects his feelings of safety in the usually unseen textures of soil, branches, bark and moss, at ground level of landscape encounter - the soil that is not often seen, or looked-for in trips to the Lakes is a picture of safety.

In *Fear of High Places* Graham has reflected on the discussion he had with the Burnley women at Windermere. Many expressed their delight at the surroundings; describing it as a landscape of *paradise*. In response to this Graham suggested taking them to the top of 'Kirkstone pass' with a steep view of the valley. The women's group became visibly anxious and without exception refused to go. The group experienced collective anxiety. The interpreter stated that they were "afraid to venture into a high wilderness landscape". The group's anxiety was evident from their body language and the tone of their conversations. In Graham's painting he interprets this fear as a barrier blocking their access into these high places. The women fear the very type of landscape walking that Wylie (2005) embarks upon. The physical act of walking the open pathways is a frightful prospect and reflects a counter to the (usually) masculinist (Nash, 1996) impulses to conquer views from the highest viewing point. The women were comfortable at low ground, in a group, and in a *social* group experience of this landscape. Yasmin describes being completely overwhelmed by the mountains "I felt very small isolated and fearful in these surroundings" In this painting Graham has tried to express these feelings in the use of composition and color. The mainly dark shape dominates the picture plain, with a dark and brooding sky above. The only relief from the somber colors is the yellow area to the right which reflects my observations of the ever changing light in mountain landscapes. Here, the 'awe' inspired by this picturesque landscape is experienced as terror in Yasmin's account; the very act of viewing and picturing the scene engenders fright. This is again counter to the 18<sup>th</sup> century practice of *seeing* beauty and awe in the majesty of these mountains.

Initially Graham found creating this body of work to be extremely challenging. Creating paintings which originated in discussions was novel. Also working

with other's whose experience of landscape was often very different than his own, was stimulating but also stirred up emotions that he himself wasn't expecting; working with émigrés and poverty stricken migrants from rural Pakistan was heart wrenching. It took a while for Graham to settle with a style, to find a way of producing successful images that would engage with the viewer and create a dialogue which expressed something of the emotions that were discussed in the groups. As a set of images they represent landscapes that are far from the 'picturesque' mode of Lorraine's art. They have an everydayness of emotions such as 'fear', 'awe', 'terror' and 'pain'. The paintings encompass a pedestrian visual grammar of landscape informed by training in abstract art; lines and block color, renders them intimate, immediate and accessible. The audience is invited to reflect on the emotional landscape and respond to the embedded registers of fear; some may reject these paintings as 'craft' on the basis of this very distinction between these 'ways of seeing' or due to their genealogy compared to Lorraine's own canvases.

### **Locating the fear of Paradise**

There is a relationship between emotional registers and landscape culture that is shaping the politics of identity and cultures of landscape simultaneously. In understanding the moral geographies of landscapes such as the English Lake District we need not simply attend to the matter of 'adding emotions' to existing accounts. Instead my aim is to show how the feelings that mobility affords - freedom, connection and disconnection, new opportunities for self-expression, loneliness, and family stress—are implicated in the experiential texture of transnational experiences. My premise here is that the emotional dimensions of transnational mobility shape experiences of place. Tracing these may bring us some way towards understanding, recording and critically reflecting on cultures



of landscape and post-migration citizenship. As Davidson and Bondi (2004) reflect,

“Whether joyful or heartbreaking, emotion has the power to transfer the shape of our life-worlds . . . Creating new fissures and textures we never expected to find” (Davidson and Bondi, 2004)

The research is within the realms of cultural and moral geographies of the English Landscape, aimed at advancing the research being conducted on environmental values held by migratory groups in Britain. This is an issue of increasing importance in an age of increasing migration, displacement and mobility from those not deemed ‘local’. More recently Mitchell (2001) has argued that embedded in cultures of national identity there is a ‘lure of the local’. It

“is not a lure of myths through which people make sense of their own lives, but the lure of mythologies through which power is consolidated and solidified, and the project of racism is advanced” (p277)

The Burnley group’s perceptions of the Lake District landscape, reveals a ‘relational’ valuing of this fecund ‘paradise’ against the oppressive, ecologically barren, and economically denuded Burnley city landscape. Through including these experiences as part of my interpretation, I aim to enrich the research process and in turn provide a ‘whole’ picture, rather than reducing the minority ethnic experience as always being relational to their urban social life. The communities’ valuing of the landscape of Gujarat in Pakistan are also embedded in their responses to the Lake District National Park – through memory. The Burnley women’s fear resonated with their lack of ‘know-how’ in this

environment, they felt disorientated by the new landscape, unknown to them. Experiences of fear were present in their own 'community' space, yet a desire for enfranchisement was less in a space that represented for them a 'fear of high places'. Their sentiments troubled me, as this group had lived in the Himalayan foothills, their 'high places' were one-hundred fold higher and steeper. The Burnley group within the landscape of the Himalayas were not carrying a portmanteau of lost dreams and lives – the women in the session recollect their mixed feelings about living in Britain "we stay for our children" is a common claim. Many of the women in their paintings described lush kitchen-gardens in Pakistan, where they lived in a cultivated landscape. They describe the ease of moving through this landscape, whereas in the UK they are shut in – as the space around is not solely for their kith and kin they risk being suspected of dishonour more easily if seen without their spouse. Since many of the women have lost their husbands to respiratory illnesses and heart disease (as a result of poor working conditions in the mill factories), they have little choice but to stay at home, with children. Their fear in the Lakes reflected physical insecurities in unfamiliar surroundings; a lack of Halal food, prayer rooms, water, distance familiarity and racism were all stated as contributing to their fears. Their incongruity was also a source of anxiety to them, however, this is not limited to Windermere but extends to Nelson and Burnley too. Racism was constantly referred to in the group conversations. On reading the Burnley landscape it was easy to see that the women had been isolated further since the riots, their alienation and oppression had increased. Many of their drawings show dark rooms, with windows looking out. These women felt despondent about their children's future. The Burnley men too found it difficult although they did not easily talk about the past – a rural life in the villages – but they were even more silent on their present lives. At home they had difficulty filling their days; with

limited possibilities of work they attended the community centre to read newspapers and attend the luncheon club. In Burnley the Asians certainly experience fear for the future welfare of their community and racist violence. Ahmed (2004a; 2004b) argues for the imperatives of racial violence to be understood as emotionally driven, her argument focuses on the collectivity of emotional imperatives for both sides of the race line.

“we can consider racism as a particular form of inter-corporeal encounter: a white racist subject who encounters a racial other may experience an intensity of emotions (fear, hate, disgust, pain). That intensification involves moving away from the body of the other, or moving towards that body in an act of violence” (Ahmed, 2004b)

For the Burnley community corporeal engagements with landscape are constantly figured through racialised, geopolitical positionings, the fear expressed here reflect their *pormanteau* of the way their landscape experiences are transposed elsewhere. However, their registers of fear are just one element of the fears that the Lake District landscape evokes in the participants. Differential registers for ‘fear’ are critical here; Sam’s experience of fear resonates with collective social fears about attack and vulnerability, but his fear isn’t about a transpersonal, affective experience. Sam feared open spaces because he felt a physical vulnerability from violence, as an individual, he is terrified of personal attack. For him the awesome landscape did not present a fear of a ‘sublime’ landscape; his sublime was in the details of close inspection of woodland, tracing patterns in the mosses, bark, and humus on the ground. Sam describes his joy on encountering micro-scale landscape

“Well incidental, they’re incidental joys I always think because they’re there just doing they’re thing. They’re not there for our benefit. They’re just being and the joy that we get from witnessing it is an incidental joy. I seem to be the only person that really enjoyed the dark places, found them safe. I do, do dark things. . . I zoomed in on sort of square foot underneath the bottom of a tree.”

Sam’s joy is operating on different registers of excitement, exhilaration that the comment “you have brought me to heaven” was inspired by, the scale of joy, the location of the experience and understandings alone are not sufficient to think through the value of ‘joyous’ spaces in this landscape. I would argue that there is a need to retheorise affectual registers through lens of understanding the positioning of the body that experiences these emotions. Emotional registers shape landscape and geographies of identification. By considering the social experiences of empowerment, occlusion, marginality, transnationalism, and alienation we can develop a nuanced approach to varied affectual geographies; treating registers of affect as multilayered occurrences of ‘fear’ and ‘joy’. Sensitivity towards vernacular landscapes and power geometries, can only enrich current landscape research.

## **Conclusion**

This paper is a reflection on the expression of fear, terror, and anxiety as garnered in the *Nurturing Ecologies* research project and the resulting representations on the canvases produced by the artist Graham Lowe. These make tangible the alternative sensibilities that this landscape engenders in varied ‘English’ folk visiting this space; ‘other’ British folk, with a right to peaceful enjoyment. It has been really important to record various responses to the English Lake District, despite my reservations about situating ‘cultures’ as

bounded, geographical and social frames, these do serve as a starting point for genealogical research that uncovers lost or hidden voices. The canvases are a set of the visualisations of landscape cultures in the Lake District, these have been a response to historical and canonised narrations. In this regard I have also sought to trouble the affectual approach to social science research, by insisting that 'race' and power figure in the possibilities of affectual encounter, but also form social identities and in turn, social landscapes (Hemmings, 2005). The Burnley group experience the LDNP as a 'sublime' landscape that reflects God's work on Earth; their feelings cultivated through religious values rooted in the Quoran. The landscape of the Lakes remains a place of sensory engagement – joyful and fearful, however understanding these affective registers as figured through socially contextual power geometries enhances the value of geographies of emotion and affect. Understanding emotions in different registers linked to 'structures of feeling' shaped by an national moral politics allow us to increase understandings of 21<sup>st</sup> century English sensibilities including those experienced by the 'mobile' English, migrants, and communities of visitors that form the maelstrom of material practices that carve out the modern Lake District experience. Wordsworth in his own guide to the Lake District describes it as being 'a sort of national property, in which every man has a right and an interest who has an eye to perceive and a heart to enjoy' (quoted in Matless, 1998, p251). This right continues to be struggled over, not simply in terms of access, but in terms of what possibilities of engagement a national culture of landscape could allow. If 'national culture' was to be determined through a broader lens of what constitutes 'national landscape', Wordsworth's humanistic utopianism could be afforded to all of today's visitor encounters who experience various registers of terror, fear, and joy.

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